

ABSTRACT

A switching system includes a backplane having slots,
each including a first set of connectors designed according to
a common specification. The slots include at least one
5 extended slot and at least two normal slots, each normal slot
including the first set of connectors, each extended slot
including the first set of connectors and an additional second
set of connectors. The backplane has signal lines to connect
the connectors of the extended and normal slots to support at
10 least one data channel between the first set of connectors of
each of one or more of the at least one extended slot and the
first set of connectors of each of one or more of the at least
two normal slots. The backplane also has signal lines to
connect the connectors of the extended and normal slots to
15 support at least one data channel between the second set of
connectors of each of one or more of the at least one extended
slot and the first set of connectors of each of one or more of
the at least two normal slots.